

ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
CONSULTANT ENGINEERING MENTOR-PROTÉGÉ PROGRAM
GUIDELINES

Effective November 1, 2009

The primary purpose of the Mentor-Protégé Program (Program) is to enhance the capabilities of socially and economically disadvantaged businesses to perform prime contracts and subcontracts. The Program centers on business collaborations between Mentor firms (prime consultants) and Protégé firms (socially and economically disadvantaged businesses certified as Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE)) to provide developmental assistance to enhance the Protégé's business and technical capabilities to do more complex work. The following guidelines shall apply to all participants in the Program:

1. Participation by both the Mentor and Protégé is strictly voluntary.
2. The Mentor-Protégé collaboration can only be on non-federally funded engineering projects. Currently this is NOT an FHWA approved program.
3. The Protégé must be a certified DBE engineering firm prequalified in at least one category.
4. The Mentor-Protégé collaboration is established by a signed, written Development Plan (Plan) that outlines the parties' goals and expectations, including monitoring and reporting provisions, the duration of the collaboration, and the services to be provided by the Mentor to the Protégé along with associated hours, and resources to be provided by the Mentor to the Protégé.

The Plan shall be submitted to and approved by the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT). The following criteria shall be met in the drafting and implementation of each Development Plan:

- Copies of the Plan shall be retained by all parties to it.
- The Plan shall clearly set forth the objectives of the parties involved.
- The Plan shall describe measurable benchmarks to be reached by the Protégé at successive stages of the Plan.
- The Plan may include training to be provided by the Mentor to the Protégé. Training areas may include:
 - Marketing
 - Administration/coordination of projects
 - Business planning
 - Recordkeeping
 - Technical assistance
 - Financial counseling
 - Training in new substantive/technical areas for the Protégé

- The Plan shall contain a provision that it may be terminated by mutual consent or by IDOT upon determination that:
 - Either party has failed or is unable to meet its obligations under the development Plan;
 - The Protégé is not progressing or is not likely to progress in accordance with the Plan;
 - The Protégé has reached a satisfactory level of self-sufficiency to compete without utilizing the Mentor-Protégé Program;
 - The Plan or provisions contained in it are contrary to the requirements of federal, state or local law or regulation; or,
 - The relationship has continued for the life of the project.
 - The Plan may include a provision that the arrangement may be dissolved by either party by notifying IDOT.
5. The Mentor must have at least five (5) years' experience as a consultant (preferably, but not necessarily as a prime consultant) on IDOT highway engineering contracts and may not have a less than satisfactory performance rating in the categories mentored. The Mentor agrees to devote a minimum of five (5) to ten (10) hours per month working with the Protégé.
 6. The Protégé must perform at least one (1) task in the performance of any contract with the Mentor. The Protégé must be an independent business responsible for the direct day-to-day activities of management, policy making and operations of the business and its contracts. Management, policy making and operational control include: scheduling work operations, overseeing engineering tasks, preparing/submitting payrolls and other required forms, hiring, supervising and firing employees.
 7. The Mentor cannot be responsible for management of the Protégé. Administrative functions must be performed by personnel responsible to or employed by the Protégé at locations under its control.
 8. Any property, equipment, personnel, supplies or other services that are sold, rented, or donated to the Protégé must be detailed in the Plan approved by IDOT and should further be covered by bills of sale, lease agreements, etc. Any financial investment and security arrangements by the Mentor in the Protégé are subject to approval under the Plan, and must not permit the Mentor to assume control of the Protégé.
 9. A non-DBE Mentor cannot be awarded DBE credit in excess of one half of the DBE contract goal on any single IDOT project for using the Protégé as a subconsultant.
 10. The Mentor and the Protégé may form a joint venture to submit a Statement of Interest on projects subject to normal joint venture approval requirements.
 11. Any collaboration in which a Mentor requires a Protégé to have an exclusive agreement may violate federal antitrust laws with respect to limiting competition. During the course of the collaboration, the Protégé must have the latitude to contract with others.

12. The Mentor will:

- a. Sign a Development Plan with the Protégé;
- b. Attend regularly scheduled meetings with the Protégé;
- c. Include the Protégé during each phase of the project;
- d. Identify and acknowledge improvements in specific areas, such as technical expertise, under specific prequalification categories as outlined in the plan;
- e. Help identify needs that can be met through one-on-one supportive services consultant assistance;
- f. Offer advice on the best ways to achieve success;
- g. Identify critical steps toward meeting goals;
- h. Respond promptly to the Protégé's request for assistance on significant business problems, not routine issues;
- i. Provide training in new skills to increase the Protégé's competitiveness;
- j. Monitor the progress of the Plan; and
- k. Report to IDOT regarding progress of the collaboration/Plan, achievements, etc., in the manner required by the Plan.

13. The Protégé will:

- a. Sign the Development Plan with the Mentor;
- b. Attend regularly scheduled meetings with the Mentor and execute specific progress steps;
- c. Implement goals and objectives developed with the Mentor and accept reasonable suggestions to improve its business;
- d. Monitor the progress of the Plan; and,
- e. Report to IDOT regarding progress of the collaboration/Plan, achievements, etc. in the manner required by the Plan.

14. IDOT will:

- a. Conduct an evaluation and assessment of potential Mentors and DBEs for participation in the Program;
- b. Provide on-going monitoring and inspection of approved Plans; and,
- c. Inform Selection Committee which firms are serving as Mentors.

15. DBE Goals and Mentor Administrative Costs:

- a. The Mentor's DBE goal for participants in the Program will be five (5) percent less than the overall stated goal for any project on which the Mentor uses the Protégé as a DBE subconsultant. The goal reduction for participants in the Program will be contingent upon the following:
 - i. A Mentor firm selected for a project may submit a request to the Department to use a Protégé.
 - ii. The goal reduction will apply only to non-federally funded projects.
 - iii. The DBE Protégé must be subcontracted to, and actually perform a minimum of two (2) percent of the total contract in order for the Mentor to be eligible for the goal reduction. This goal reduction will be implemented only on approved projects in order to assess the effects of the Program.
- b. The Plan may include a fee schedule to cover the direct and indirect costs incurred by the Mentor to provide training and administrative or developmental assistance to the Protégé. The fee schedule is subject to IDOT approval and fees are eligible for reimbursement as part of the prime contract.

16. The Mentor-Protégé Program is not intended to diminish or circumvent existing DBE rules or regulations, but rather is intended to increase legitimate DBE activities. Abuse of this Program may be used as the basis for action against both the Mentor and Protégé including, but not limited to, suspension or debarment.

17. Except as indicated otherwise herein, all federal regulations, local, state and federal statutes, in addition to IDOT policies, must be adhered to in the conduct of any Mentor-Protégé collaboration or activities.